

# THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

## THE AMERICAN WING

AN ADDITION CONTAINING

THE GREAT HALL

FROM THE VAN RENSSELAER

MANOR HOUSE



SECTION II OF THE BULLETIN OF  
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
NEW YORK, DECEMBER, 1931

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THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
1931

## AN ADDITION TO THE AMERICAN WING

THE publication of this supplement to the BULLETIN is occasioned by the opening this month of an addition to the American Wing, a small one-story building designed for the installation of the hall from the old Van Rensselaer Manor House at Albany and of a room from a house in Providence, Rhode Island.

The first article in the supplement gives a brief account of the history of the patroonship and manor of Rensselaerswyck and the building of the great Manor House, together with a detailed description of the beautiful woodwork of the hall, presented to the Museum in 1928 by Mrs. William Bayard Van Rensselaer in memory of her husband. The paneled doors of the hall were presented by the Trustees of the Sigma Phi Society of Williams College, having been used in the society's house at Williamstown after the Manor House was torn down. The installation of this interior has been completed by the addition of the original wall paper, which came to the Museum in the year 1928 as the gift of Dr. Howard Van Rensselaer, consummated by his heirs. This notable wall paper and the sources of its designs are discussed in the second article in this supplement.

In connection with the opening of the Van Rensselaer hall, a small exhibition of distinguished examples of early New York silver has been organized, to be displayed in

the American Wing in the assembly room from the City Tavern, Alexandria, Virginia, from December 8 through January 31. The third article in the supplement discusses some of the outstanding features of this exhibition.

The first room in the addition, opening from the American Wing, is the room from Providence, Rhode Island, the woodwork of which was taken from a house built between 1794 and 1798 by Captain Samuel Allen and anonymously given to the Museum in 1930. From the Providence room a passage leads to the Van Rensselaer hall and provides a small exhibition gallery.

The façade of the addition permits the display of three exterior doorways which hitherto the Museum has had no opportunity to exhibit permanently. The central doorway comes from the City Tavern in Alexandria, completed in 1793, from which the woodwork of the assembly room and the mantelpiece installed in the alcove on the second floor of the American Wing were taken. The doorway to the south, representing a familiar style of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century in the middle states, came from the Runyon house in Trenton, New Jersey. To the north is displayed a doorway from Bristol, Rhode Island, dating about 1800, an excellent example of a type common in the vicinity of Newport and Bristol. JOSEPH BRECK.

ACCOUNT OF THE PATROON'S HOUSE a BUILDING  
the Masons began to work on Monday

13th May, 1765

This legend, inscribed on the first yellowed page of an account book bound in an old newspaper, carries down through the years the sense of an important event recorded. The Proprietor of the Manor of Rensselaerswyck, lord of over seven hundred thousand acres—four and twenty miles on both banks of the broad Hudson and crosswise a day's journey of forty-eight miles—with judicial and civil power over his many tenants, was building a new manor house suitable to his dignity and position.

The formation of this vast estate, whose almost feudal character gave it a unique place in Colonial history, was due to the development of the Dutch West India Company, that commercial organization which so logically embodied the seventeenth-century idea of founding colonies and trade by strength and gunpowder. Killian Van Rensselaer, a wealthy merchant of Amsterdam, was a member of the Assembly of Nineteen, the governing body of the Privileged West India Company. In 1629, Their High Mightiness the States General ratified the Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions, approved and adopted by the Council, which gave the title of patroon and the right to purchase land from the Indians to those stockholders of the company who, within four years, would plant a colony of fifty souls upward of fifteen years old in New Netherland. The founder of the colony was to be invested with privileges of an extensive kind, including the administration of justice, the appointment of magistrates and ministers, and the right to certain services from his tenants.

Within a year after 1629, Killian Van Rensselaer, through his agents, had begun to purchase lands from the Indians, and by 1637 the vast estate was complete, with

title duly acknowledged and confirmed by the West India Company at Manhattan. So powerful did the patroonship become within a quarter of a century that the vigorous Heer Brandt Aarent Van Schlichtenhorst, director and agent for the patroon, who was in Holland, was able to defy Peter Stuyvesant in an exchange of hostilities; the discomfiture caused the fiery governor at Manhattan is highly amusing in retrospect. When New Netherland fell to the English in 1664, possession of Rensselaerswyck was provisionally confirmed to its proprietor, and in 1685 the patroonship was converted into an English manor or lordship. The owner of the manor was not, however, invested with any patent of nobility. In peaceful settlement of the long-standing feud between the proprietor and the Company, which held Fort Orange, the city of Albany was cut off from the manor. The judicial powers of the proprietor were continued under English rule, and from 1691 to 1775 Rensselaerswyck had its own representative in the General Assembly of the colony. Succession of title to the manor descended through six generations to Stephen Van Rensselaer, "the last of the Patroons" (1764-1839). At his death right of inheritance by primogeniture having come to an end under New York State laws, he bequeathed the western part of the estate to his son Stephen and the eastern part to his son William.

Stephen Van Rensselaer, the father of the last patroon, built the great Manor House, placed near the old house built in 1668, and to it he brought his young wife Catharine, who was the daughter of Philip Livingston, signer of the Declaration of Independence. It was scarcely completed, however, when he died in 1709, and it was



DETAIL OF THE VAN RENSSELAER ROOM SHOWING  
THE TREATMENT OF A DOORWAY

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not until his son Stephen became of age in 1785 that the life of the Manor House really began. He had married in 1783 Margaret, daughter of Major General Philip Schuyler, of The Pastures, Albany. Stephen was born to the position of hereditary proprietor of an almost feudal estate and related by blood and marriage to the leading families of the colony, but he was a man of liberal ideas, and, with the passing of the old order, he devoted himself to the administration of the new republican government. Although the principles of government had changed

canal, and railroads began to disturb the peace of the riverside gardens. Then the old house was deserted and dismantled; the wall paper was removed from the hall, some of the woodwork was taken out, and in 1894 the walls were carefully torn down stone by stone, carried with the timbers to Williamsburg, Massachusetts, and used in the erection of the house of the Sigma Phi Society of Williams College.

In 1928 the scenic wall paper came into the possession of the Museum by gift from the late Dr. Howard Van Rensselaer, con-



DESIGN FOR SPANDREL ORNAMENT FROM A NEW BOOK OF ORNAMENTS WITH  
TWELVE LEAVES, BY LOCK AND COPLAND

and some of his privileges were abrogated, the proprietor of Rensselaerswyck remained in possession of his lands. He accepted and approved the changes which, to a greater or less degree, affected the fortunes of many of the leaders of the time. Perhaps they seem more crucial to us because we realize how far-reaching were the effects of the first steps taken by the Colonial oligarchy in the direction of a democracy.

For more than a hundred years a wide hospitality was dispensed by the patroons, as they were still called, and many celebrated men of the country and distinguished travelers from abroad were entertained in the famous Manor House. Meanwhile, the city of Albany gradually closed in around the park of the manor, and the docks,

summated by his heirs. The reassembling of the room was then made possible by Mrs. Van Rensselaer's gift of such of the woodwork of the great hall as had been installed in her Albany house. Knowing of the plan to reconstruct the room in an addition to the American Wing, the Trustees of the Sigma Phi Society of Williams College presented the paneled doors of the hall, which were in the society's house. The restoration of the parts of the original woodwork which were missing was based on rare and interesting old photographs and plans of the hall.

In plan, the hall of the Manor House resembles that of Mount Pleasant in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, and some of the plantation houses of the South rather than Northern houses of the third quarter of

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the eighteenth century. The visitor entered directly into the great hall, 23 feet 6 inches by 46 feet 10 inches, with a large archway on one side opening to a small hall or alcove containing the stairway.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the front and rear doorways there were four smaller doorways leading from the hall to the four rooms of the first floor. All the

The windows of the room were naturally confined to the front and rear; two ample, deeply recessed windows, with low seats filling the embrasures, appear at either side of the main doors. The dado is not paneled, but the somewhat heavy scale of the rest of the woodwork in the room is maintained by a strongly molded baseboard and chair rail.



DETAIL OF THE ARCH LEADING TO THE STAIR HALL, SHOWING ROCOCO ORNAMENT  
FOLLOWING THE DESIGN REPRODUCED ON PAGE 6

doorways have the same architectural treatment. Above the crossetted architraves is a bold torus molding which serves as a frieze for the cornice. The cornice is elaborated by a dentil course, and modillions of considerable scale support the crown moldings. The cornice moldings are repeated in the broken pediments above the doorways.

<sup>1</sup> Practical considerations have made it necessary for the present to wall in the arched entrance to the stairway. The measurements are those of the reconstruction.

The woodwork of the archway leading to the stair hall is the most elaborate in the room. Flanking the opening are two fluted Ionic pilasters resting on paneled pedestals of the height of the chair rail. Recessed fluted piers<sup>2</sup> support the arch, which is elaborated with a molded keystone. The spandrels of the archway are filled with deeply undercut rococo carving. The design of intricate scrolls, pierced shells, leaves,

<sup>2</sup> In the present installation of the woodwork these piers do not stand free of the wall.

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and blossoms was taken line for line from a plate in *A New Book of Ornaments with Twelve Leaves* by M. Lock and H. Copland, published November 13, 1752.<sup>3</sup> The book shows designs for the decoration of "chimneys, sconces, . . . spandle pannels, . . . stands, a chandelier and gerandole, etc." It is the design for "spandle pannels" which was copied in the spandrels of the archway in the Manor House.

Books on architecture and ornament were by no means lacking in the libraries of gentlemen in Colonial America and undoubtedly were available to Stephen Van Rensselaer and to Major General Philip Schuyler, whose Albany house, *The Pastures*, was built in 1761-1762 under the supervision of his wife, the famous "Kitty" Van Rensselaer, while he was in England. A third house, known as the *Vlie* house, built by Hendrick Cuyler about the same period, is interesting for comparison with the Van Rensselaer and Schuyler houses. Although the interiors of the Manor House and *The Pastures* are not very closely related in their plans or architectural detail, some of the woodwork in the Manor House and the *Vlie* house is so strikingly similar that it is obvious that the builder of the *Vlie* house either copied the woodwork of the Van Rensselaer house or drew his designs from the same sources used by the builder of the Manor House. The cornices used in the hallways of the two houses are identical, except that in the *Vlie* house a fret is substituted for the dentil course used in the cornice of the Van Rensselaer hall. The stairway in the *Vlie* and Schuyler houses ascended at the back of the hall and an archway separated the front and rear parts of the hall. The fluted piers and the moldings of the architraves of the arches are almost identical in the *Vlie* and Van Rensselaer houses. The *Vlie* house, the Manor House as it appears in an early nineteenth-century painting, and *The Pastures* were substantial rectangular structures with thick brick walls and hipped roofs. We do not know that there was any architect or architect-

<sup>3</sup> In the Department of Prints, Metropolitan Museum. The source of the design for the carving in the spandrels was discovered by Edna Donnell of that department.

builder in Albany who could have been responsible for the design and erection of these houses; more likely it was the owners themselves who planned and directed the work. In a most interesting book on the Schuyler Mansion<sup>4</sup> we read that in 1761-1762 "numbers of carpenters had been attracted to Albany by the war, and being idle for the time, Colonel Bradstreet advised Mrs. Schuyler to make use of them." Apparently Mrs. Schuyler and her aides, Colonel Bradstreet and Nicholas Bayard, needed only the assistance of John Gaborial, master carpenter, to superintend their undertaking. The Manor House was more pretentious than the other two houses. It was four years in building and was among the most important dwellings erected in the Colonies. The only names, however, which we can at this time connect with the management of the building operations are those of Stephen Van Rensselaer and General Abraham Ten Broeck, who was guardian for the patroon during the latter's minority.

Fortunately there is documentary evidence concerning the actual building and the men who worked on both the Schuyler and Van Rensselaer houses. For the Manor House we have the account book mentioned at the beginning of this article.<sup>5</sup> The closely written entries begin on December 11, 1764, six months before the "Foundation was laid," and record payments to various individuals for hewing timbers, molding and burning brick, breaking stone, and setting marble "mantles." Loads of Tappan stone and bushels of lime are entered again and again; lath, nails, and shingles are bought in large quantities. The whole account totals more than £4,966,<sup>6</sup> a sum which, we know from at least two existing bills not mentioned in the ledger, does not fully cover the

<sup>4</sup> The Schuyler Mansion at Albany, 1762-1804, p. 5. New York, 1911.

<sup>5</sup> The account book is in the possession of Mrs. William Bayard Van Rensselaer. We are greatly indebted to Mrs. Van Rensselaer for the use of this book and for other documents which have been available through her efforts.

<sup>6</sup> To arrive at the value in pounds sterling these figures must be divided in half, for New York money in 1765 was worth just about half of the English. New York money had depreciated at that time more than that of Massachusetts or New Jersey.

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original cost of the great house. Some of the men who worked on the Schuyler house were also employed by the patroon: William Waldron, who was General Schuyler's master mason, is paid £371.3.9 by Mr. Van Rensselaer, and "Luykas" Hoogkerk, who made the bricks for The Pastures, receives in our account book £7.0.0 for "seven days and nights on the Brick Kiln." In the Van Rensselaer ledger the largest amounts, however, are paid to workmen the nature of whose services is not indicated. Thomas Smith Diamond's accounts appear from September, 1765, through February, 1768, and amount in all to £278. Jacob Lansing, who worked from 1764 to 1768, received £263; and Zeph Batcheller between 1765 and 1768 was paid £202. Among the Van Rensselaer papers rescued from the fire in the New York State Capitol is a charred bill of Thomas Diamond, or Diamen, for "712 foot of cherre board and . . . foot of curled maple," bought of Henry Quackenboss, who received payment from Abraham Ten Broeck.

That there was constant building activity at the Manor House is indicated by fragmentary bills turned up among the Van Rensselaer papers during a search for definite confirmation of the tradition that the great Albany architect of the early nineteenth century, Philip Hooker, made extensive alterations in the house. The search was not wholly unrewarded. On December 16, 1817, Stephen Van Rensselaer, at the request of P. Hooker, paid for 300 feet of clear board "used for the blinds of the second story of the New House." Again on February 10, 1819, Hooker asked the patroon to pay for 75 joists used for the roof of the piazza. There is no definite proof that the lumber was used in the Manor House, but at least we know that Hooker was employed by the patroon and may have designed the doors which screened the opening to the stair hall and which have been omitted in the present installation as being later than the original woodwork. The extensive alterations and additions to the Manor House carried out by Upjohn

in 1843, when the great wings were added, so changed the appearance of the exterior that little of its eighteenth-century character remained. He substituted new doors for the old paneled front and rear doors of the hall, but fortunately the original doors were preserved. The object of this delving into records was to determine whether there was any documentary evidence of changes made in the woodwork of the great hall after the building of the house. No such documentary evidence was found. Besides, all of the woodwork is eighteenth-century in design and execution.

Few rooms of the Colonial period show such elaboration of detail and decoration. The scale of the woodwork is heavy and the wall paper adds to the richness of the effect. The hall is not the work of a great designer, but its treatment is entirely consistent and it conveys an impression of great style and dignity. It represents the successful effort made by wealthy colonists to follow the latest English fashions in building and decoration. Aside from its architectural interest, the room has unforgettable associations with the history of New York as province and state from Colonial days to the end of the last century. The hall reflected, too, the life of the family. Here were displayed the heirlooms connected with the family history and furniture, bronzes, and marbles gathered by the Van Rensselaers through many generations. No attempt has been made to furnish the room with historical pieces; in fact, we do not know what its original furnishings were. The woodwork has been painted a gray-green after an old formula so frequently used in the eighteenth century. The room itself is, however, as it was when the young patroon first took possession of his house in 1768, and as it was almost twenty years later when Stephen Van Rensselaer, the last patroon, came to his majority and the faithful General Ten Broeck entered in his account book a generous "charge for beef and liquor consumed in a dinner to the tenantry on this your glorious twenty-first birthday."

RUTH RALSTON.

## THE VAN RENSSLAER PAINTED WALL PAPER

About forty years ago when modern industrialism brought a railroad siding to the

Jones designed for the Earl of Pembroke.  
The wall paper, which has lain rolled up



FIG. 1. THE CASCADE AT TIVOLI. ENGRAVING BY LE VEAU AFTER THE PAINTING BY LA CROIX, THE ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR THE WALL PAPER PANEL IN FIGURE 2

Van Rensselaers' back gate in the center of Albany, the descendants of the patroons, like their prudent Dutch forebears, bowed to the inevitable and went quietly out the front door. One of them, however, with a foresight unequalled in his generation, did not abandon the ancestral manor house until after he had taken the paper from the wall of the great hall. This room, with an arched opening to the stairs in the center of the left wall, measured on the plan 22 feet 6 inches by 45 feet 9 inches and was possibly inspired by the famous "double cube room" at Wilton House, which Inigo

all these years, and the woodwork have now been brought together again in a room in an addition to the American Wing which is to be known as the Van Rensselaer Room. This reconstruction of some of the architectural elements from the house of Stephen Van Rensselaer shows one of the most celebrated of the rooms of old Albany just as it appeared in the Albany Manor House when the eighth patroon entertained his relatives the Schuylers and his brother-in-law Alexander Hamilton.

Although the house was begun in 1765, the paper probably was not hung before

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769. Bought from Neate and Pigou of London<sup>t</sup> by the well-known New York merchant Philip Livingston for his son-in-law Stephen Van Rensselaer, it was shipped from New York to Albany on October 12, 1768. At that time Philip Livingston wrote the following letter to his son-in-law:

please You. the directions how to place the paper is in the Box & You must take special Care if You Open it to look at, that it be putt up as You found it, with the Letters on the out side I Opened it and think it very Handsome indeed.. I am told You Intend to gett Stucco work on the



FIG. 2. PAINTED WALL PAPER PANEL. COMPARE FIGURE 1

New York 12 Octob<sup>r</sup> 1768-

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

I send You by Cap<sup>t</sup> Van Alen a Box Mark<sup>d</sup> P. which Contains 4 Marble slabs which I ordered for You from Holland the cost of them is as p: Acco<sup>t</sup> Inclosed £18. .0. .10 I also send a small Case Marked P. which Contains paper for Your Hall which Cost £38. .12. .8 $\frac{1}{2}$  for both which sum I have debited Your Acco<sup>t</sup> I wish they may

<sup>1</sup> Kent's London Directory for 1763 has the following entry: "Neate and Pigou, Merchts. St. Mary Hill."

Ceiling of Your Hall which I would not advise You to do, a Plain Ceiling is now Esteemed the most Genteel I send You Also by Van Alen, a Comyene Cheese putt up in a Barrel with 12 Coco Nutts, & in an Old bottle Case are 5 doz. Oranges & a few Limons Your Mother Also sends for Katey a pott sweet Meats we Expect Peggy & Sally Every day the Cold weather will doubtless drive them home very soon—with my Love to M<sup>rs</sup> Rensalaer & the family—I remain

Your Affect. Father

Philip Livingston

The wall paper, which Livingston considered "very Handsome," consists of enormous oblong scenic panels of romantic landscapes (cf. figs. 1 and 2) and seaport views, framed in painted rocaille scrolls, alternating with smaller cartouches inclosing representations of the four seasons (cf. figs. 3 and 4), and the doorways are flanked by trophies representing the elements—earth, air, fire, and water—hung from painted bowknots.

We know from an advertisement in the Boston Weekly News Letter that "Paper

ing cheaper than whitewashing." Wall papers of the pre-Revolutionary period now in existence and descriptions by contemporary writers show that India painted papers and those covered with small floral or Chinese motives were the vogue. At the time the Van Rensselaer house was built, however, the possession of a painted scenic wall paper gave its owner the same prestige that an original Adam room did. Among the properties advertised for sale in the New York Mercury in the issue of March 19,



REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE

FIG. 3. SUMMER. ENGRAVING BY LARMESSIN AFTER THE PAINTING BY LANCRET, THE ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR THE SCENE IN THE WALL PAPER PANEL IN FIGURE 4

for Rooms" could be had in the Colonies as early as 1734 and that wall paper was in common use by the middle of the eighteenth century. At that time many dealers advertised as having "lately imported from England paper hangings in the newest fashion, both flowered and Gothic." Gerardus Duyckinck in 1764 advertises in the New York Mercury that he has for sale "as extraordinary an assortment of handsome high and low priced paper hangings with their borders, as have ever been imported at one time in N. Y." By 1784 the rising popularity of painted walls had induced one dealer more enterprising than the others to advertise "The very low price at which they [wall papers] will be sold will make paper-

1764, we find this notice:

To Be Sold

A Farm upon Staten Island of about 160 acres . . . . The house is commodious and well furnished . . . . the Dining Room is 14 x 19, hung with genteel paper . . . . The Parlour is 19 x 20 hung with Landskip paper, framed with papier mache.

There are two other sets of paper known to be like the Van Rensselaer paper, one in the Jeremiah Lee house in Marblehead and the other in Harrington House, England.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Van Rensselaer wall paper, together with that in the Lee house and that in Harrington House, England, will be discussed more fully in *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, vol. IV, part 1.

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March 19,

from the same engraving, one by Huquier. This identity of pictorial source has led some of the writers about wall paper to conclude in each instance that the two panels are

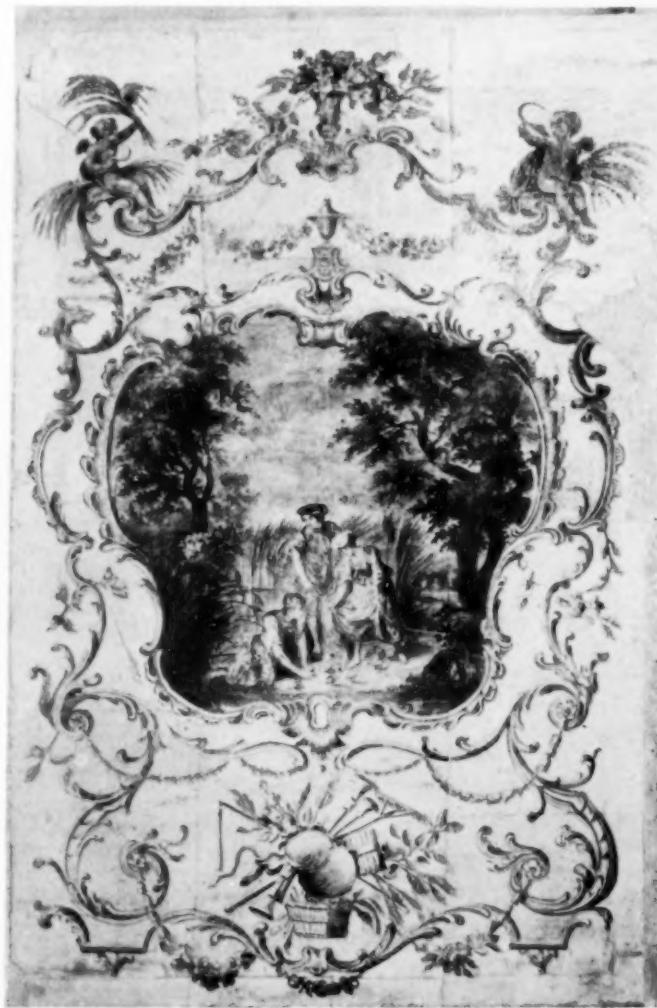


FIG. 4. PAINTED WALL PAPER PANEL. THE SCENE OF THE CARTOUCHE IS COPIED FROM THE ENGRAVING IN FIGURE 3

after the painting of Montferrat in Sardinia by Joseph Vernet (1714-1789). The panels are quite different in size and shape, and in each case the composition has been adapted to fit the space. A trophy panel in the Lee house and one in Harrington House are also

identical. From this conclusion they have inferred that the papers are printed, and naturally are by the same artist.

The most famous, and mysterious, maker of wall paper in England in the middle of the eighteenth century was John Baptist

Jackson.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, what could be more simple? All three sets of wall paper were made by Jackson.

This J. B. Jackson published in 1754 a book entitled *An Essay on the Invention of Engraving and Printing in Chiaro Oscuro, . . . and the Application of It to the Mak-*

*wich . . . Rensselaer papers stainer . . . scenic . . . orders . . . issue a . . .*  
Follow attribu-  
pers to

yond the title page of this rare little book<sup>4</sup> they would have learned from its ten pages of text that Jackson's paper, "being done in oil, the colours never fly off. By this means the same beauty continues as long as the Paper can hold together; whereas in that done with watercolours, in the common



FIG. 5. PAINTED WALL PAPER PANEL FROM THE  
VAN RENSSLAER SET

ing Paper Hangings of Taste, Duration, and Elegance, by Mr. Jackson, of Battersea. In this he says he is prepared "To offer himself forth then to the Knowledge of his Country" by making wall paper.

This is the evidence on which the attribution to Jackson of all eighteenth-century English wall paper has been based. But had the writers about wall paper read on be-

<sup>3</sup> Jackson's style and technique are taken up in detail in *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, vol. IV, part 1.

Way, six months makes a very visible Alteration in all that preposterous Glare which makes its whole merit; and one Year . . . and it becomes a Disgrace to the very Wall it covers." From all of which we may conclude that Mr. Jackson had a very formidable and successful competitor in the wall-paper business whose product was "done with watercolours." And it is from this unidentified manufacturer, be it Brom-

<sup>4</sup> A copy is in the Museum Print Room.

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wich or Spinnage,<sup>5</sup> that the Lee, Van Rensselaer, and Harrington House wall papers must have come. Here was a paper stainer who employed at least four skillful scenic artists and who was so busy filling orders that he neglected to write a book or issue a trade catalogue.

Following out the tradition that has attributed all eighteenth-century wall papers to Jackson, the writers about wall

above the overdoors were replaced. Some time in the seventies, according to an oral communication from William Connors, his father repainted the entire yellow background with a yellow calcimine. In this process the outline of the design was encroached upon in many places.

On the reverse of each sheet there is an English tax stamp. This stamp (fig. 7) is the G and R interlaced and surmounted by



FIG. 6. PAINTED WALL PAPER PANEL IN THE LEE HOUSE IN MARBLEHEAD  
NOTE THAT THE TREE IN FIGURE 5 IS IN A DIFFERENT POSITION

paper have described these papers as printed, whereas both the Van Rensselaer and the Lee papers are painted in tempera on small sheets of watercolor paper, about 21 by 27 inches, pasted together. The scenes are in gray and black, touched up with white, and the scroll framework of the Van Rensselaer set is in gray and white on an ocher yellow background. The original painting on the wall paper was done in England in 1768. Later the original panels

the crown. An Act of Parliament of 1712 required that each sheet of paper painted in Great Britain for wall hangings must bear this stamp to indicate that the 1½d. tax per square yard had been paid by the manufacturer.

We know that the Van Rensselaer paper was made to fit the hall of the Manor House, for we have the measured drawing of the room which was sent to the manufacturers in England. On it are noted in one handwriting the dimensions of the wall spaces and openings and in another the titles of the various scenes, lettered to show

<sup>5</sup> Bromwich and Spinnage are discussed very fully by Sugden and Edmondson, *A History of English Wallpaper, 1500-1914*, pp. 73-79, 86.

their location on the wall. As Philip Livingston wrote, "the directions how to place the paper is in the Box & You must take special Care if You Open it to look at, that it be putt up as You found it, with the Letters on the out side . . . ."

The scenes represented in both the Van Rensselaer and the Lee paper are taken from paintings by such eighteenth-century favorites as Vernet, Lancret, and Pannini. The interesting thing, however, is that the scenes are not copied from the paintings themselves but from prints after the paintings engraved by contemporary engravers like Le Veau and François Vivares (1709-

1780). This was a simple and practical scheme worked out by some business genius who knew that prints after Vernet's paintings were much sought after in England as well as in the Colonies. He had heard that in 1760 Robert Adam had redone the Great Hall at Compton Verney for Baron Wiloughby de Broke and had hung his Canalettes and Panninis on the walls, framed in stucco scrolls. So for those who could not have original Canalettes and Panninis, this British tradesman invented substitutes which in time became more fashionable than the originals.

EDNA DONNELL



FIG. 7. BRITISH EXCISE STAMP  
FOUND ON THE REVERSE OF  
THE WALL PAPER PANELS

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## ONE HUNDRED NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF EARLY NEW YORK SILVER

The installation of the hall from the Van Rensselaer Manor House at Albany, described in the preceding articles, offers a peculiarly fitting occasion for holding a special exhibition of early New York silver. In order that the display be distinguished, an effort has been made to keep it compact, to confine it to work of the pre-Revolutionary period, and to show only examples of first quality. With this object in view an assemblage of over one hundred notable pieces has been arranged in the assembly room from Alexandria, Virginia, in the American Wing, the dignity of this setting according well with the simplicity and distinction of the silver. Coincidently with the opening of the Van Rensselaer Room, the silver will be shown to Members and their friends at a private view on December 7 and will be on display to the general public from December 8 to January 31, inclusive.

Many of the exhibits are lent by Yale University from the Mabel Brady Garvan Collection. A number of the long-established churches in and around New York have consented to contribute some of their communion plate. These two sources have yielded so generous a supply of silver that it has been necessary to borrow only sparingly from private collectors. Unquestionably many other handsome pieces might have been included in the exhibition if the Museum had not confined itself within definite limits in point of numbers.

The Museum has prepared a catalogue containing a brief introduction and illustrations of almost all the silver included in the exhibition. The latter should convey, far more vividly than would a long descriptive text, an idea of the character and of the charm of early New York silverwork.

The illustrations in the present article are designed to suggest some of the out-

standing features which the exhibition as a whole will abundantly demonstrate. The indebtedness of the early New York craftsman to his Dutch masters is exemplified not only in the shapes of several of these pieces but also in their engraved and embossed decoration. The makers—Jacob Boelen, Cornelius Vanderbergh, Bartholomew Schaats, Cornelius Kiersteade, and a maker thus far unidentified, whose initials are P VB—were early and accomplished silversmiths. The associations of the examples illustrated are most interesting and varied, linking them with distinguished New York families and suggesting relationships and customs in the social history of the colony.

The two most common styles of drinking cup used by early New Yorkers were the beaker, a tall, slightly flaring, tumbler-shaped cup (fig. 2), and the tankard, a vessel with straight, somewhat tapering sides, handle, and lid (fig. 1). The beaker was particularly associated with the communion service in the Dutch Reformed churches, and in its most characteristic form was engraved with interlacing bands of strapwork, floral scrolls, and oval medallions containing female figures symbolic of Faith, Hope, and Charity. A number of these church beakers are included in the exhibition. Other examples, of which relatively few seem to have survived, have secular designs and associations.

A particularly handsome example is shown in figure 2. Instead of Faith, Hope, and Charity, the designs in the three medallions represent a beaver—presumably symbolizing the fur trade so profitable to the early colony—a group of geese, and a vase of flowers. The significance of the two last has not been satisfactorily explained. Just above the molded base are engraved other symbolic designs. On one side the beaker

bears the name "Robbert Sanderson" and the date 1685. Robert Sanders's ancestors were English Protestants who fled to Holland during the reign of Queen Mary; subsequently some of them settled in America in the vicinity of Albany and Schenectady, near the great patroonship of Rensselaers-

The silversmith who fashioned it and stamped it with his mark was Cornelius Vanderbergh. The piece was continuously in the possession of the Sanders family until recently, when it was acquired by Francis P. Garvan and presented by him to the Gallery of Fine Arts at Yale University.



FIG. 1. TANKARD BY BARTHOLOMEW SCHAATS

wyck. The early settlers in this region rejoiced in fertile fields but were continually exposed to the danger of attack by Indians coming down out of the wilderness to the north. Robert Sanders himself was a trader and commission merchant. In his dealings with the Indians he manifested so friendly an attitude that some of the Mohawks, in appreciation of his services, so the tradition runs, gave him this beaker.

Vying with the beaker in popularity, the tankard because of its greater capacity proved well adapted for such beverages as beer. The example by Bartholomew Schaats belonging to Mrs. Frederic Grosvenor Goodridge (fig. 1) is relatively small and particularly gracious. The coat of arms on the front, not yet identified, is beautifully executed and quite characteristic of the work of early New York engravers, who



FIG. 2. BEAKER BY CORNELIUS VANDERBERGH PRESENTED  
TO ROBERT SANDERS IN 1685



FIG. 3. TEAPOT BY JACOB BOELEN WITH PHILIPSE ARMS



FIG. 4. BOWL BY CORNELIUS KIERSTEADE

undoubtedly drew their inspiration for such heraldic designs from Holland.

Only slightly less popular than the beaker and the tankard in early New York was the wine bowl, usually made with two handles. The smaller bowls were often plain, but the larger examples received ornamentation, generally consisting of six panels inclosing conventionalized flower designs. The style had come from Holland, and, so far as we know, was not copied elsewhere in the American Colonies. Cornelius Kiersteade, who made the handsome bowl shown in figure 4, was born in New York and worked there until he was nearly fifty years of age, when he moved to New Haven. Presumably this bowl was made after his removal to New Haven, but it follows in every detail the Dutch traditions that distinguish early New York silver. In 1745 the bowl was given to a Yale tutor, Thomas Darling, by his students and subsequently was presented by one of his descendants to Yale University.

More sporting associations cluster around the porringer shown in figure 5. This piece, made by the unknown silversmith PVB, is engraved "1668, wunn att hanpsted plaines, march 25." It is one of the earliest dated pieces of New York silver known. Colonel Richard Nicolls, first English governor of New York, desiring to improve the breed of horses in his newly acquired colony and doubtless also gratifying his own love of racing, in 1665 ordered a race course one mile in length laid out near the village of Hempstead and offered as prize a silver cup. The winner of the porringer illustrated is believed to have been Captain Sylvester Salisbury. His son, Francis Salisbury, in 1693 married Marie Van Gaasbeck of Kingston, and theirs presumably are the initials F S M (Francis and Marie Salisbury) that were later engraved on the side of the porringer. They lived first at Kingston and later built a great stone house near Leeds. Their grandson, Major Francis Nicoll, mar-

ried one of the Van Rensselaers of Albany. Thus the history of the porringer is linked with the story of the great manor. This delightful trophy, so much more charming than our modern racing prizes, was presented recently by Francis P. Garvan to Yale University.



FIG. 5. RACING TROPHY WON  
AT HEMPSTEAD, 1668

Simple, unassuming, but with a distinction of its own, the teapot lent by Pierre Jay (fig. 3) testifies to the skill of one of the outstanding New York silversmiths, Jacob Boelen. Probably based on some Dutch prototype, it represents a rare and early style. The features that particularly indicate its early period are the spherical body, straight spout, simple insetting cover, and ring foot. On its side, engraved with beautifully flowing acanthus scrolls, appear the arms of the Philipse family, lords of the manor in Tarrytown.

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